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### American Dessert Festival Captures Mass Media Attention

**Report Categories:**

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**Report Highlights:**

ATO Vladivostok organized an American Dessert Festival held January 28 to February 4, 2010 at a local coffee house. Several USDA Cooperators participated in the promotion, including the Pear Bureau Northwest, California Prune Board, and the Almond Board of California. The ATOs main success from the event was the media value created. The event was covered by 14 mass media outlets and was featured on a website that draws 10,000 viewers a day. This quantity and quality of media coverage would have been virtually impossible for the individual commodity groups to capture.

**General Information:**

ATO Vladivostok organized an American Dessert Festival held January 28 to February 4, 2010 at the Oaxaca Coffee House in Vladivostok. Several USDA Cooperators participated in the promotion, including the Pear Bureau Northwest, California Prune Board, and the Almond Board of California. The main objective of the festival was to increase awareness of these American products among the target audience: the media, Oaxaca's middle- to upper-class customers (i.e. young working couples, working women and housewives aged 25-45, and health-conscious parents), and future chefs from the local Institute of Food Technologies and Commodity Sciences.

After pulling together the industry representation and securing the venue, ATO Vladivostok worked closely with the Consulate's Public Affairs section to exceed expectations for media coverage of the event. The opening ceremony was attended by 14 mass media representatives including TV channels, newspapers, on-line editions and lifestyle magazines, which equates to media market saturation. In addition, a press release was circulated announcing the forthcoming festival. Online coverage continued well after the event with various outlets posting video and text on their websites including the popular local weather forecast site which is visited daily by approximately 10,000 people in the Russian Far East (RFE).

At the opening ceremony, the press sampled a special menu which featured desserts using California almonds and prunes, NW pears, and pecans (provided by the ATO). Almonds and pear samples were given to visitors who ordered desserts from the special menu. And dessert recipes containing almonds, pears, and prunes were displayed and distributed. For the chef trainees, the Master classes demonstrated healthy and easy dessert options to make at home with American ingredients and provided an opportunity for the students to use the ingredients in a creative way.



**Oaxaca owner, Tatyana Dyachenko tells why she uses U.S. food ingredients in her cafe – superior quality and taste**



**CG Tom Armbruster greets the guests**



**Desserts prepared by OAXACA chef and students for tasting at opening ceremony**



**Culinary students with Professor & CG opening ceremony**



**Mass media turnout at the opening ceremony**

A video devoted to highlights from the Festival was posted on YouTube in order to reach a broader audience. The video also helps U.S.-based Cooperator representatives visualize the activity and its benefits. The ATO will use the YouTube video as a “recruitment tool” to organize additional joint activities with Cooperators in other cities. Follow this link to view the video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qnh19YBt2Mw>.

Raising awareness of these products will help to boost sales in the Russian Far East. The U.S. share of fresh apples, pears and quinces imported into the Russian Far East totals more than 37 percent. Apple, pear and quince imports into Russia in 2010 increased by 42.11 percent and mixtures of nuts and dried fruit – including prunes -- grew by a whopping 207.58 percent.